

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN  
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

LORI WILLIAMS,  
Plaintiff,

Case No 10-cv-1028

V

Hon. Gordon Quist

CITY OF LANSING  
LANSING POLICE DEPARTMENT,  
Defendant.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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## Fired Lansing police officer's lawsuit alleges gender bias

Others used police computer illegally and got lighter punishment, union says

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Written by  
Kevin Grasha

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The firing this week of Lansing police officer Lori Williams for improperly using a police computer system on the surface appears unusual.

Other officers found to have used the Law Enforcement Information Network for unauthorized reasons faced internal discipline, according to police union officials.

Attorney Hugh Clarke Jr., who represented Williams during her trial last month on misdemeanor charges, said the punishment was excessive.

"I'm not saying there shouldn't be some internal discipline, but this is rather extreme considering the violation," Clarke said.

Last month, Williams was ordered to pay \$350 after a jury in 54A District Court found her guilty of one misdemeanor count of accessing nonpublic information for personal use. Initially, she was charged with four counts of the offense.

A lawsuit Williams has filed against the department specifically mentions Lansing police Detective James Gill, saying he "improperly used (LEIN and) was never charge(d) with any criminal activity."

In an interview Wednesday, Gill confirmed that more than 10 years ago he was disciplined internally for improperly using the system. He said he received a 30-day suspension, but that was overturned through the grievance process.

Interim Lansing Police Chief Teresa Szymanski declined to elaborate on her reasons for firing Williams, an eight-year

### What is LEIN?

• The Law Enforcement Information Network is a statewide computerized information system that is available to all law enforcement agencies. It can tell police just about anything, including whether someone is wanted for arrest or is a sex offender. It also can be used to find confidential information, including whether someone has a juvenile record or a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

• According to state law, a person shall not - for personal use - access, use, or disclose nonpublic information taken from LEIN.

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veteran.

Szymanski would only  
say the firing resulted  
from the findings of a  
criminal investigation  
by Michigan State  
Police and the  
department's own  
Internal Affairs  
investigation.

As a result of those  
investigations, she  
said, there were

"sustained complaints of violations of policy and procedure."

The Lansing State Journal on Wednesday filed a Freedom of  
Information Act request with the department for the Internal Affairs  
report. A response is expected next week.

According to trial testimony, Williams accessed the computer  
system to look up:

- Information about her father, who allegedly was involved in drugs.
- Information about a confidential informant.
- Her husband's driver's license number to fill out a work-related  
insurance form.

Williams was convicted only on the count related to her husband's  
driver's license number.

She said she looked up her father and the criminal informant to find  
out if they had warrants out for their arrests. Those were legitimate  
law enforcement purposes, Clarke said.

Williams' lawsuit, which is pending in federal court, accuses the  
department of systematic discrimination "due to her gender" over  
the last two years.

The discrimination included, the lawsuit says, questioning known  
felons about whether Williams was ever involved in criminal activity,  
removing her from certain patrols and denying her hours  
comparable to male officers.

It asks for a judgment "in an amount established by the facts,  
together with interest, costs and attorney fees."

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